



# Elder Financial Abuse

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

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## Fraudulent Charities

*A person from a charity called seeking donations. How do you check if a charity is legitimate?*

Sadly, after a disaster strikes or some calamity in which charitable giving is needed, scammers try to take advantage of people's generosity.

Criminals often will target seniors, calling their homes and asking them to donate using their credit or debit cards. Don't be fooled. If a caller claims to be with a charity, ask for the organization's full name, telephone number, mailing address and charity registration number.

### Warning Signs

- The caller insists on having you pay over the phone with a credit card or asks for your checking or savings account numbers.
- You are offered a gift if you donate. Trust your instincts. If it does not make sense, it may not be a legitimate charity.
- The representative uses pressure tactics.
- The representative, who claims to be with a well-known charity, asks you to make the check out to a business or individual – not the charity. Don't do it.

### Prevention

- Take the time to research if the charity is legitimate. Such organizations give you the opportunity to confirm they are a genuine charities.
- Ask to review written materials on the charitable organization before donating. Legitimate charities willingly send informational material to prospective donors.

There are resources that will allow you to check if a charitable organization is legitimate.

Visit the California Registry of Charitable Trusts website (<http://oag.ca.gov/charities>), call (916) 445-2021 or send inquiries to P.O. Box 903447, Sacramento, CA 94203-4470. Also visit the BBB (Better Business Bureau) Wise Giving Alliance website ([www.bbb.org/us/charity](http://www.bbb.org/us/charity)) call (703) 276-0100 or send inquiries to 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22203.